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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001491

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EUR/NCE FOR ERIC FICHTE

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TU, AF, KPAL, CH, EZ

SUBJECT: CZECHS ON THE DECEMBER 11-12 GAERC

REF: A. STATE 195044

[B.](#) STATE 194456

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary. At the December 11-12 GAERC, the Czechs expect the focus to be on the Balkans, the Middle East, Afghanistan, China, and Turkey. Czech policy continues to closely track U.S. policy in these regions/countries. At the upcoming GAERC, the Czechs will support (1) ICTY compliance and the EU perspective for Serbia (FM Vondra will call for the EU to send "positive signals" to Serbia in the run-up to the January elections), (2) a National Unity government in Palestine that embraces Quartet principles, (3) the proposed ESDP mission in Afghanistan, (4) the China Arms Embargo, and (5) a moderate approach to Turkish accession negotiations (the Czechs responded positively to Turkey's recent offer to open one Turkish port to Cyprus). End summary.

[¶](#)2. (SBU) Poloff met December 7 with Czech MFA Director of the CFSP Vaclav Balek to discuss the December 11-12 GAERC and deliver refs A and B talking points.

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Balkans  
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[¶](#)3. (C) The Czech position on the Balkans remains unchanged. The Czechs plan to focus on Serbia at the upcoming GAERC. They will continue to call for full ICTY compliance, while encouraging Serbia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. FM Vondra plans to speak on the importance of EU sending positive signals to Serbia, especially before the January elections to counter the influence of the nationalists.

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Middle East  
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[¶](#)4. (C) On Israel-Palestine, the Czechs continue to urge a unity government that will accept the Quartet principles. They also support (with both "cautious optimism" and "skepticism") the Spanish/French initiative. It offers a renewed chance for dialogue and momentum. However, to be successful it must be "realistic" and coordinated with the international community.

[¶](#)5. (C) On Lebanon, the Czech parliament approved a mandate for up to 10 Czech troops for UNIFIL. Balek said that this amount is largely symbolic, due to funding restraints.

[¶](#)6. (C) The Czechs continue to support sanctions for Iran.

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Afghanistan  
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¶7. (C) The ministers will discuss the launch of an ESDP mission in Afghanistan. The Czechs strongly support this initiative. They believe the combined "concentrated" efforts of the EU, NATO, the UN, and the United States will help stabilize the country.

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Turkey  
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¶8. (C) The Czechs support Turkish accession to the EU, and generally agree with U.S. positions on the talks. Balek said the Czechs are encouraged by Turkey's recent offer to open one port to trade with Cyprus. They are not in the camp calling for a deadline for Turkey to implement the customs union protocol.

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China  
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¶9. (C) The Czechs continue to support the EU China Arms Embargo. They also support improvements to the existing Code of Conduct governing arms licensing. However, the Czechs do not believe that having a better Code of Conduct warrants giving up the Embargo, which Balek described as an important "political tool."

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